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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAKU 001017

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/13/2017
TAGS: PGOV PREL IR AJ
SUBJECT: AHMADINEJAD TO VISIT BAKU AUGUST 21-22

REF: A. BAKU 919
B. BAKU 954

Classified By: DCMDonald Lu for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) n August 13, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) notified the Embassy that Iranian President Ahmadinejad will be visiting Baku August 1-22. The MFA provided no further details about he visit.

¶2. (C) During an August 9 meeting wih the then-Charge, Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Novruz Mammadov said that he was busy preparing for the Ahmadinejad visit, noting that he had been forced to forgo his annual vacation in order to do so. At the time, Mammadov said that the Azerbaijani side was aiming for the week of August 20 and expected the visit to be on August 21-22.

¶3. (C) Comment: As of August 14, news of the Ahmadinejad visit had yet to be publicly announced, possibly due to our efforts to ensure that any possible Ahmadinejad visit be low-key and not yield any significant agreements (reftels). We will continue to pulse our Government of Azerbaijan (GOAJ) contacts for details about the visit and report accordingly. Separately, we note that Ahmadinejad's visit will immediately follow an August 16-18 visit by Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Avigdor Liberman. Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Mammadov reportedly told Israeli Ambassador Lenk that there would be "no problem" with back-to-back visits by such senior Israeli and Iranian officials. End Comment.

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